

Demon HAC

By LCdr. Kelly Schoen

We had a HAC on our cruise whom everyone despised. All the H2Ps would play cards, and the loser had to fly with the demon HAC. I won at cards most of the time, but, when I did lose, I would trade my flight for standing an extra shore-patrol watch for one of the other H2Ps.

The OinC finally noticed my scheduling prowess, and I was tapped for a 10-hour day with the Demon. We were to service the battle group with vertrep and passenger transfers. Crew coordination with the Demon was so bad that none of the H2Ps would talk to him. The most anyone would offer was “yes” or “no.” His favorite thing to hiss when you got in the aircraft was, “Don’t touch anything unless I tell you.”

After 10 hours,

“Don’t touch anything unless I tell you.”

we were tired. We were waiting on a retro pick-up and stopped for gas aboard a nearby ship. After we had filled up, the HAC lifted the H-46 into a hover. He was telling a joke as he pedal-turned the aircraft perpendicular to the ship. He pulled a little power and pushed the nose over, supposedly transitioning to forward flight. Upset that no one was laughing at his joke, he turned his head to look down the tunnel at the crewmen to see their reaction. As his head

turned to face the back of the helo, the aircraft began settling toward the water. He had pushed too much nose-over without enough corresponding power. I paused but didn’t want to say anything because I didn’t want another chewing out.

The water approached fast. I called, “Power,” and grabbed the collective and stick. We had water spray in our rotor wash and had descended well below flight-deck level.

The tower was screaming at us to state the nature of our emergency. “We thought you lost an engine,” they said. How could I tell them we almost drove a perfectly good H-46 into the



Photo by PHAN Alisha Clay
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water because the HAC was telling a joke, facing the tunnel, and the copilot was simply watching the whole event unfold? 🦅